

TT No.47: Brian Buck - Thursday 3rd October 2019; **Exeter City U23** v Aston Villa U23; Premier League Cup Group D; Result: 3-0; Attendance: 520.

Time for a week's break! This was my wife's idea and I wasn't too fussed if we came or not. All I had to do was to find half a dozen matches to watch and so I managed to find a week where there were plenty of games to choose from. Actually, I got lucky with this one tonight, as it was only arranged about ten days before it took place, otherwise I would have had nothing to watch tonight.

So, after having a trouble-free drive down to our B & B in Exmouth, which brought back memories of watching Fawlty Towers all those years ago, I set off for the game, by car. I could have gone by train, getting off at St James Park, right next to the ground, but I noted that the return train departed at roughly the time I was due back at the B & B. This was nearly a big mistake, as when I arrived at the ground it was extremely difficult to find a parking space in the narrow streets surrounding the ground and at one point, I got held up for five minutes when a *DPD* van blocked the road while he tried to make a delivery.

Anyway, eventually I did find somewhere to park and with rain falling I then made my way to the main stand, where the whole crowd sat tonight. Team sheets were available, by donation, with the profits going to the Youth Academy. There was excitement on the seller's face when I offered a pound coin, quickly followed by a frown when I asked for 80p change! There again, they did charge £4 to get in for OAP's! My only previous visit to this ground occurred on 7 March 1990 when I saw Exeter City beat Halifax Town in a Barclays League Division 4 match (att. 5,528). Since then most of the ground has changed beyond recognition and the chap who built the original structure on the side of a hill in the middle of a residential area should be given a medal if he is still alive. Quite how he achieved it is beyond me, but I doubt if they ever have any games called off for waterlogged pitches here.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about tonight's match was that some visiting fans turned up to watch their side. Full credit to them, but their heroes weren't interested at all and they were beaten by a side which contained young players with youthful enthusiasm. Exeter took the lead on 43 minutes when the ball was slotted home after confusion in the Villa area. The lead was doubled on 48 minutes from the spot, with the reason for it being awarded unclear to me and the third goal came on 71 minutes when the scorer rushed in unchallenged to head home a corner. By now the Villa keeper was having a nightmare and was having the mickey taken out of him by the home fans.